



LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES

February 9, 2011

BOARD PRESENT: Amir, Bailey, Brodsky, Dickerson, Lewis, J., Lewis, O., Neuman, Riccardi, Watts

STAFF PRESENT: Parker Hamilton, Director; Regina Holyfield-Jewett, Recording Secretary

GUESTS: Elliot Chabot, Chair, Library Advisory Committee, Aspen Hill Library

The Library Board meeting was convened by Chair Brodsky at 7:10 p.m.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Minutes from the November 10, 2010 and January 12, 2011 meetings were approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Raesa Sheriff-Merchant has resigned from the Library Board.

David Chiles and Richard Bryant are absent due to medical reasons.

On Saturday, January 15, Jill Lewis and Otto Lewis also took part in the Manna food drive at the Giant in Wheaton. The food drive was very successful.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

There was an article in the ***Gazette*** announcing MCPL's new policies which include no food or drink besides water will be allowed in the branches. The article also stated that the branches had infestations of vermin. There are bugs and mice in some of our branches, but no infestations. The County has not cut back on its exterminating budget. David Dise and Director Hamilton wrote a letter to the *Gazette* to correct what was misquoted.

The **"no food" policy** was put into place because it became very difficult for staff to monitor what food was being brought into the branches. Some customers were bringing full meals into the branches (chicken, pizza, etc.). Food stains and spills were being transferred to books, computers, carpets, etc. Staff will not be required to police this, but the policy will be in place if staff should come across someone eating a full meal; the customer can be asked to finish their food outside before returning.

Other changes in policies are that customers are being required to have their cell phones on vibrate when in the branches and they are also being asked to bring their library card in order to check out materials.

A **cartoon** ran in today's ***Gazette*** regarding Libraries. It is a good message.

Friends of the Library, Montgomery County, Inc. and its chapters, since being asked to temporarily change their policy regarding funding basic services, have donated \$140K to the Library Department. Board members were asked to please thank Ari Brooks, Executive Director, FOLMC and Friends members when you see them. Director Hamilton will work with Ari Brooks to have a special event to thank not only Friends of the Library, but also the Library Board and the LACs for all the hard work they have done this past year in the support of Libraries.

A copy of the 2010 edition of the *Laws of Maryland Relating to Public Libraries* was provided to all Board members. Director Hamilton asked the Board members to pay close attention to page 68, Section 06., **Free Public Library Services**. This section gives the definition of free library services. Ideas are coming in as to how Libraries can improve its budget, and there seems to be a great deal of interest in charging a fee for library services. Board members were asked to please review this section in order to be able to explain to those who ask why Libraries cannot charge customers to check out books, pay a fee to obtain a library card, etc.

Maryland Legislative Day is February 23 beginning at 8:30 a.m. in Annapolis. Board members planning to attend are asked to please contact Kay Bowman or Joseph Eagan with a copy to Director Hamilton as soon as possible. Carol Leahy and Aileen Klein, FOLMC, will be attending. Packets will put together to distribute to the elected officials.

Board members should have received an email from the **Citizens for Maryland Libraries** (CML). Board members are automatically members as a result of the Library system being a member and will receive updates and information from CML. If any member does not want to be on the CML's listserv, please let Director Hamilton know.

On March 8 at 7:30 p.m. in the third floor hearing room of the Council Office Building (COB) will be the public hearing to amend the **Silver Spring Urban Renewal Plan**. If the plan is amended, it will take the discussion further on whether or not a bridge can be built from the Wayne Avenue Parking Garage to the new Silver Spring Library. Signup to testify begins on February 17, please call 240-777-7803.

Connie Latham, Special Assistant to the County Executive, who oversees the Boards, Committees and Commissions, sent a voicemail message to Director Hamilton in which she states:

You wanted to change the language that allowed the advisory committee to provide the Branch Manager with input. The best way to do that would be [to add] "to provide the Library Manager or Branch Manager with input on behalf of the Library Board." It's always representing the Library Board. So that's the need to show that continuity. The second half of your question which is participate in activities including testifying before Council and appearing at Council hearings, that would be okay if you put, "in support of positions taken by the Library Board." [In other words, everything they do, as long as] What it implies is that the Library Board has approved it and the Library Board wants them to do this. They should not be doing this independently from the Library Board or taking any other position than the one that the

Library Board wants them to take. So hopefully this is clear enough. You can put them both in with a little caveat that the first one is on behalf of the Library Board and second one is in support of the position taken by the Library Board.

Connie Latham, who worked with the County Attorney on this revision, is speaking on behalf of the County Executive about the Library Board's position at it relates to the Library Advisory Committees, acknowledging again that the LACs are subcommittees of the Library Board.

There was discussion regarding the implications of the emphasis placed by the County Executive's Office on the LACs being subcommittees of the Library Board. If persons are testifying in the capacity of LAC members, they should inform the Board and submit their testimony to the Board prior to the scheduled hearing. Any activities conducted by LAC members on behalf of the LAC should be done so with the support of the Board. Chair Brodsky will incorporate this language into the LAC Handbook and then circulate the updated version to all Board members.

Library Board liaisons to the LACs should obtain calendars of their respective **LAC meetings** and make every effort to attend the meetings. If it is known ahead of time that a liaison cannot attend a meeting, the liaison should contact other Board members to ensure that the Board is represented.

An email regarding the cancelling of Board meetings and LAC meetings due to inclement weather was sent to all Board members.

Ms. Latham was also asked the question that was originally posed to Jill Lewis regarding an individual serving on more than one LAC at the same time. According to the current Handbook, an individual can only serve on one LAC at a time. She was also asked if the Board could create a system-wide subcommittee on the issue related to people with disabilities. Ms. Latham will ask the County Attorney if the Board has the authority to create a new subcommittee. The current LAC related to those with disabilities is mainly focused on Rockville – there should be a system-wide focus.

There was discussion regarding the LAC's accessibility to Rockville Memorial Library; lack of easy accessibility to the building has been an issue with the DRC LAC from the beginning. Rotating the location of the meeting did not work in the past. The County Attorney will also be asked if the group might be able to meet virtually.

Citing personal reasons, the chair of **Quince Orchard LAC**, Julie Gilbreath, as well as two other members, has resigned. Director Hamilton is scheduled to meet with Ms. Gilbreath next week. Ms. Hamilton will try to encourage her to return. Ms. Gilbreath is very creative, intelligent, energetic and was a great asset to Libraries. Other Board members also expressed interest in reaching out to Ms. Gilbreath.

NEW BUSINESS:

Conference on Funding Sources

Chair Brodsky attended the Aspen Hill LAC meeting in Rev. Bryant's stead. The Aspen Hill LAC would like to sponsor their own conference on alternative funding for MCPL. Chair Brodsky reminded the LAC that they were a subcommittee of the Board, and this topic would be brought before the Board for discussion. He also stated that the Director and staff were working

on alternative funding sources. The Board encourages enthusiasm and activism by the LACs in a coordinated manner.

Alternative Funding Sources

MCPL requested and received approval from the CAO to aggressively approach businesses in the County to ask them to support Library services. Department representatives have met with the County Attorney and the Department of Finance. The rules of engagement are almost finished. Internal work is being done to identify the materials, especially databases, that the Department is interested in acquiring. These materials are being matched with businesses in the County in order to do targeted approaches. Director Hamilton may be attending a meeting in March with the County Executive and a group of private funders who locally do people funding (health and human services). Libraries is not the only County department that is looking at this avenue. While the wealth in the County has declined, school enrollment has increased.

Question: Is there a quid pro quo? Will businesses that fund services have naming rights?

Answer: Yes, the Department of Finance is involved for this reason.

Question: If the Department is wildly successful in getting alternative funding, will this be taken into consideration for future budgeting? Does the material budget get diminished?

Answer: The County sees itself as the major funder for public libraries. Mr. Leggett has stated that when the economy gets better he will make every effort to restore funding to Libraries especially in the areas of staffing, hours and materials. We believe going forward that this will enhance us. It also gives the businesses in the County the opportunity to do good.

There was discussion regarding the processes involved in reaching out to these businesses. This is a major step and it is wonderful to see years of work come to fruition.

OLD BUSINESS:

Encourage continuing outreach in the communities regarding the budget and attending public meetings. Bringing communities into the discussion that have not been involved before such as the Hispanic/Latino community. Board members should talk to the Agency Managers to get names and contact information for those customers who use the libraries regularly who can share their stories.

Paulette Dickerson has created a flyer for MCPL using a template from Cecil County. This flyer includes information from a 2006 State-wide survey and comments from Montgomery County library customers from Snapshot Day 2010. This flyer will be sent to the LACs electronically. The date the comments were collected will be added to the flyer. Ms. Dickerson will also offer the LACs the opportunity to add branch specific comments to the “comment page.”

Chair Brodsky explained that the Board is trying to reach out to the Board of Education and Montgomery College. The Board would like to create a relationship of support with these two groups – not asking for money, but for their support when they are before Council. Director Hamilton had a conversation with Dr. Judy Docca, and Ari Brooks, Executive Director for FOLMC, was asked to reach out to Laura Berthiame. Ms. Berthiame is very supportive of Libraries and stated that if given the opportunity to talk about MCPL’s role, mission and defend what Libraries do, she will do that. Schools are concerned that they are being attacked as never before. They want to ensure that they have the funds to provide resources to their students.

MCPL wants acknowledgement that what Libraries do helps the education fabric within Montgomery County.

Dr. Bailey will be organizing a meeting with MCPL, Universities at Shady Grove and the Public School system to discuss how to provide resources with public funding.

LAC INFORMATION/LAC UPDATES:

Board and LAC Activities Committee (J. Lewis, Neuman, Riccardi, Sheriff-Merchant)

LAC Awards Committee met to brainstorm. In previous years there have not been many submissions; there was confusion regarding who was to complete the application, why and who is to be nominated; and the same groups receiving the awards year after year. In the past, the awards had been presented during the joint meeting of the Board and LACs. This meeting was canceled last year due to budget constraints.

In the first meeting of the Committee, it was decided that the awards process did not have to be the same each year. It was also decided that there would be only two awards, the Ablard Award and the LAC Member of the Year Award. The Committee is going to do a massive education for the LAC about the Awards and the process. The nomination form will be made more uniform. The liaisons with the Agency Managers and LAC Chairs will be the nominators. The liaison will be responsible for completing the nomination form. Hopefully, simplifying the process will garner more submissions. Director Hamilton has offered the FOL/LAC Thank You event as the venue to present the awards. This event is being planned for June which will allow more time to publicize the Awards.

The Citizens for Maryland Libraries (CML) also has an awards program for which the winners of the Ablard and LAC Member of the Year awards could be nominated.

The Committee will also be looking for sponsors for the awards.

The Committee also discussed how to get the LACs energized. There are not enough members on the LACs; there should be a membership drive. Many of the LACs who are not working may not know their role. An assessment should be done to determine what is happening with the LACs that are not working and with those that are working. Separating the FOL meetings from the LAC meetings is one avenue to consider. Educating the new Board member(s) to what their role is as liaisons is very important. Have buddies for the new Board members who will attend the first LAC meeting with the new member.

An email will be sent out to the Board members and LACs a day or two after the Board meeting to highlight action items.

There was discussion regarding membership drives, reaching out to FOL member and how to reach out to other ethnicities. Director Hamilton will invite the liaisons from the Office of Community Partnerships to a Board meeting to discuss reaching out to the County's ethnic communities. The Committee will focus on membership drives and energizing the current membership. The next Committee meeting will be on March 9 at 6:00 p.m.

The **Silver Spring LAC** conducted a petition signing.

Chevy Chase LAC is looking for a library superhero.

Legislative and Public Affairs Committee

The Committee will begin scheduling meetings with Councilmembers for after the budget hearings.

The annual meeting with the County Executive will be on February 10, 7-9 p.m. in the Executive Office Building Cafeteria.

The CIP Budget will be discussed before the HHS Committee on February 17.

LAC Applications

The LAC member nominations were approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There seems to be a disconnect between what the Board chair is saying that the LACs must adhere to what the Board wants/says and in energizing the LACs. If the Board meets and makes decisions and then dictates to the LACs as if they were foot soldiers, this will not be energizing. There must be open dialogue.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

B. Parker Hamilton